

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 HA-05 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 SS-15 STR-07 CEA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7854

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2037

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN EINV SHUM ES
SUBJ: IFI LOANS - EL SALVADOR

REF: STATE 103956

1. PRESIDENT ROMERO RECEIVED ME THIS MORNING AND I CONVEYED TO HIM RATHER FULLY THE CONTENT AND TENOR OF REFTTEL REGARDING USG INABILITY ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS TO SUPPORT TWO OF THE THREE IMMINENT IFI LOANS.
2. PRESIDENT HEARD MY PRESENTATION IN SILENCE AND THEN COMMENTED THAT IT SEEMED SOMEWHAT PEREMPTORY TO RECEIVE SUCH A MESSAGE JUST 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE INTERAGENCY MEETING (APRIL 28). THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT TIME, HE SAID, TO SAY OR DO ANYTHING MEANINGFUL AND WHICH COULD CHANGE USG ATTITUDES WITHIN THAT SHORT PERIOD.
3. PRESIDENT SAID THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY AND HE WAS DISMAYED TO FIND USG APPARENTLY ACCEPTING AND BASING ITS ACTIONS UPON ONE SIDE, A VERSION SKILLFULLY AND WIDELY BEING DISSEMINATED BY ENEMIES OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

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4. AS RECENT EVIDENCE OF MODERATION WHICH HE HAS BEEN SEEKING TO IMPART TO GOES ACTION, PRESIDENT REMINDED ME OF RESTRAINT EXERCISED IN FACE OF HOSTILE OCCUPATION OF FOUR FOREIGN EMBASSIES AND NATIONAL CATHEDRAL. AT HIS EXPRESS INSTRUCTION, HE SAID, OCCUPYING FORCES HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO VACATE THE PREMISES AND DEPART WITHOUT MOLESTATION OR DETENTION BY SECURITY FORCES. AS ANOTHER INSTANCE, HE

NOTED THAT GOES HAS NOW GIVEN PERMISSION FOR MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION BY WORKERS. DESPITE POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE ON THAT OCCASION, PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY HAS INSISTED ALL POLICE AND MILITARY FORCES BE OFF THE STREETS THAT DAY AND IN THEIR BARRACKS SO AS TO REDUCE LIKELIHOOD OF INCIDENTS.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE THREE LOANS, PRESIDENT SAID HE HOPED USG WOULD SUPPORT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (STAGE III) LOAN IF IT FELT IT COULD DO SO ON BASIS OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS CRITERIA. GOES, HE SAID, WOULD REQUEST DEFERRAL OF VOTE ON OTHER TWO UNTIL LATE MAY.

6. TO DEVELOP USG SUPPORT FOR THOSE TWO LOANS IN LATE MAY, PRESIDENT INDICATED HE WOULD WORK FOR DEMONSTRABLE IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS ALONG LINES SET FORTH

IN PARA 4(A) REFTTEL. HE FELT THAT SOME POSITIVE STEPS WOULD BE POSSIBLE AND HOPED THAT USG WOULD RECEIVE AND VIEW WITH SYMPATHY WHATEVER PROGRESS MIGHT BE ACHIEVABLE IN THIS SOMEWHAT DELICATE AREA.

7. IN CLOSING OUR CONVERSATION, PRESIDENT AND I AGREED THAT CONTINUING DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOES AND EMBASSY WOULD
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BE HELPFUL IN SEEKING TO ACHIEVE MEANINGFUL OR ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF PROGRESS BY LATE MAY. FOR THIS PURPOSE, HE SAID HE WOULD DESIGNATE VICE PRESIDENT ASTACIO AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR GENERAL ROJAS TO BE IN TOUCH WITH ME. MEANWHILE, HE SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT I MAKE THE SAME PRESENTATION TOMORROW TO THE VICE PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF PLANNING REYES.
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